

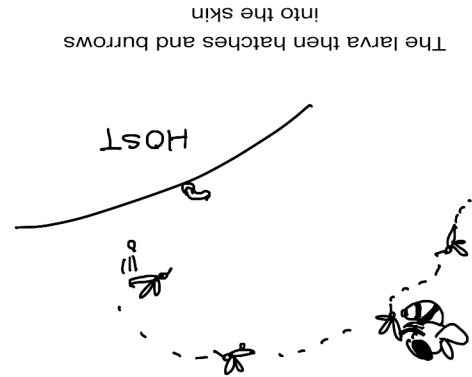
Parasitophobia

(on predators that like to procrastinate)

But parasitism is much more interesting than just unpleasant images...
What is parasitism?
It is very similar to predation: in both cases a creature gains benefit at the expense of other organisms. Think of parasitism as a slower form of predation. The parasites are just trying to feed on the host like lions need to feed on gazelle.
There are many kinds of parasitism...



The tapeworm might be the first mental image that appears when the word "parasite" is mentioned.



For example, parasites of mammals: The Botfly is known to parasitize humans
The female botfly lays her eggs on a mosquito and releases it. When the mosquito is near the human host, the body heat causes the egg to drop off...
The larva then hatches and burrows into the skin



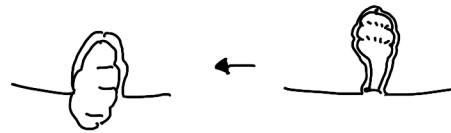
the Small Science Collective
<https://http://smallsciencezines.blogspot.com/>

by Shelly Liu (2014)

References:

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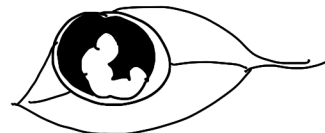
Why do they do it?
Staying inside the host reduces their food competition and exposure to predators.
Bottles generally do not cause too much harm to the human host except for some irritation around the infected area and a few grams of flesh! Compared to a lion eating you, it is much less harmful.



The larva feeds on the host's flesh, matures and pupates. Eventually it drops off the host and emerges as adult botfly

Then there are Gall-Making Insects, a less gory form of parasitism. Usually the insect does far less harm to the plant it makes a gall in.

The gall-making insect injects chemical to promote host plant to grow a gall. The plant tissue forms a protective shell around the larva that also provides food.

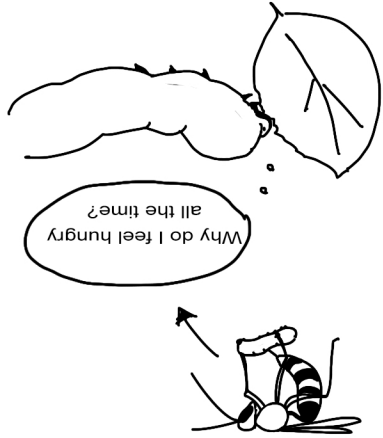


Gall-making insects actually make quite beautiful galls!



Sometimes the galls are even used for flower arrangement as well as medicines.

The eggs hatch and feed inside the caterpillar. The caterpillar will continue to eat, grow and even defend predator.



But how about "entomophagous" parasites? Perhaps insect-to-insect parasitism sounds better than a human botfly... Female parasitic wasps first find the proper host and lays her eggs inside the host (a caterpillar in this case) -

Eventually only an empty shell of the caterpillar is left. The wasp larvae chews out of the skin, spins a cocoon and pupates!



It is a form of parental care on the part of the wasp, ensuring a higher survival rate for their offspring. On a more positive note, these parasitic wasps are good for garden pest control when those caterpillars are eating your vegetables...

